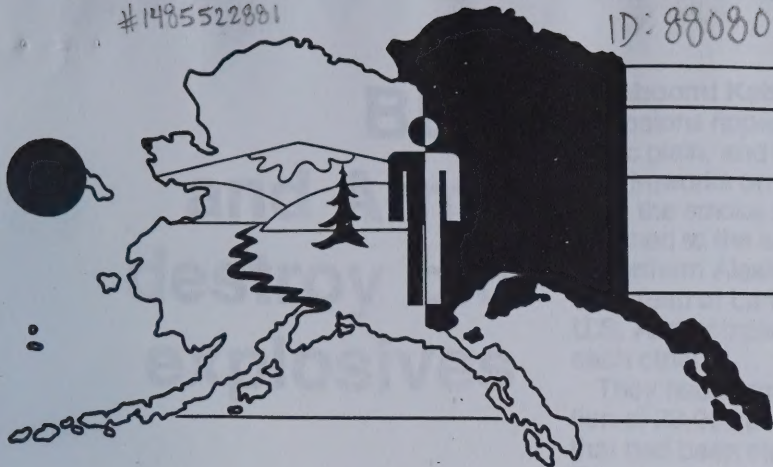


blm - alaska

frontiers

managing public lands for multiple use

Issue 14 January 1989

At Paxson Lake**Fishing's not over yet**

In a few minutes it would be done. This was the last of fifteen lines they were setting on the frozen Paxson Lake. It was February and the ice was thick on this Southcentral Alaska lake, and the days were beginning to lengthen. Perfect for ice fishing.

Ruth scooped the last bit of snow from a three-foot area on the lake's surface and waited for her father, Larry Kajdan. The tedious task of drilling was usually left to him.

Kajdan, who is an outdoor recreation planner for the Bureau of Land Management, brought the auger and began drilling a hole through the ice.

It was a sunny weekend, and he and his family were enjoying the beginning of the end of winter.

While Ruth waited for her father to finish, she watched her mom, Cherie, and younger sister, Katie, "jigging" a line. Jigging is the bobbing motion used to attract fish to bait. "Maybe we'll be lucky and catch a fish for dinner tonight," Ruth thought, but this nine-year-old fishing pro knew that burbot usually hit during the night or early morning.

Her older brother John returned breathlessly from the woods with spruce branches. These would mark the location of the holes.

When her father finished drilling the six-inch hole, Ruth baited a hook with the head of a whitefish and extended the line from a 12-inch square of scrap plywood into the depths of the lake.

Her brother chipped at the ice to keep the hole from freezing until her father covered the hole with the plywood. Then they covered the plywood with a thick layer of snow. This would keep the hole ice-free until they returned the next day.

John then marked this last hole with his prize spruce branch, which he'd saved as the final marker. The holes can be hard to find after a night of drifting snow.

The afternoon sun soon faded into darkness and the 10 degree below zero temperature, once invigorating, now gnawed at the family, making it easy for them to call it a day.



Ice fishing, a traditional Eskimo subsistence skill, is now a form of winter recreation.

Ruth picked up the bait and extra lines while her mom made sure nothing was left behind. Loading their two sleds with unused bait and extra supplies didn't take much time. Donning snow shoes, they began the short trek back to the BLM Paxson Lake campground about 200 yards away. Some people camp there overnight and return early in the morning for their catch. But this cold evening they would spend at home in Glennallen.

They usually got fish. Ruth never had any doubts when it came to ice fishing; the fish were almost always there for the taking. Pulling up the fish is Katie's favorite job of the trip. And she wouldn't be disappointed this time either.

The lure of ice fishing is definitely hooking more and more Alaskans. It's a winter sport requiring little equipment but lots of common sense. Fish and Game

continued on p.2

BLM and Army destroy old explosives

Kaboom! Kaboom! White-hot explosions ripped the silence of the arctic plain, and lit the dark expanse like fireworks on Fourth of July.

As the smoke cleared and quiet returned to the snow-covered valley in northern Alaska, the small group of Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Army employees congratulated each other.

They had completed the destruction of 22,000 pounds of explosives that had been stored near the Sagwon airstrip on BLM-managed land for more than 20 years.

The old Sagwon site, next to the Sagavanirktok River, had been a staging area for geophysical exploration companies in the late 1960s. After oil was discovered at Prudhoe Bay in 1968, most exploration efforts moved north, and the explosives were left behind at Sagwon.

During the past five years, people have been flying private airplanes into Sagwon for hunting trips, and BLM became concerned about public safety.

BLM completed an environmental assessment for the project in 1987, and was granted permits by the Environmental Protection Agency,

the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. BLM also coordinated with the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, since the Trans-Alaska pipeline is near by.

The first 10,000 pounds were detonated in the fall of 1987, amid heavy snow and freezing temperatures. The explosives were set on the gravel bed of the flood plain to avoid damaging the tundra. Holes left by the explosion blend in with the surrounding landscape, which is covered with small potholes.

Then last September the BLM/Army demolition crew detonated the remaining 12,000 pounds of explosives.

This cleanup of the Sagwon airstrip was another step in the rehabilitation of the North Slope for public use. Most of the exploration activities occurred before passage of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The Sagwon airstrip is open to the public; however, it is closed from April 1 to September 1 to protect the nesting areas of arctic peregrine falcon.

—SDV

Ice fishing —

from page 1



John and Kate Kajdan love ice fishing.

fisheries biologist Butch Potterville says, "Don't get in too much of a hurry when you ice fish. Some people risk it and go out too early and fall through the ice."

Larry Kajdan says, "It's best to wait till there's four to six inches of ice."

As for when to fish, Potterville says, "The fall and late February is when burbot are most active."

Burbot, a tasty white fish in the cod family, is the predominant fish caught, although rainbows and lake trout can also be had.

But never go alone. Potterville says ice fishing is a team sport. Safety reasons alone should discourage anyone from fishing by themselves.

Anyway, Larry Kajdan comments, "It's most fun when you take family and friends."

There are several ways to get to the fish. Many streams and lakes

are road accessible and require only a short hike. For longer treks, snow shoes, cross-country skis and snow machines will do the trick.

Paxson Lake, a favorite of Kajdan's, is a large lake where snowmachines come in handy. Although the Kajdans usually encounter no more than three to four people when fishing there, a snowmachine can take you to the upper reaches of the lake where few people go.

Although the burbot are not as plentiful as in the past, Potterville says they're still easy to catch.

If you're going to be dropping a fishing line in the Glennallen area, take a friend, pack the necessary gear, and pick up a copy of the Fish and Game regulations. But most of all, use a lot of common sense and have fun.

—DA

*Put
it
out!*



*Let
it
burn!*

Summer fires spark hot debate among fire managers

The fires of 1988 are leaving a legacy of more than blackened trees. After a controversy over the way fires were handled in 1988, land managers from many agencies are reassessing fire management policies.

Last summer was unusually dry, creating the worst fire season in 10 years. Fires burned over several Native allotments, destroyed several trapping and recreational cabins in the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge and caused thick smoke. Some people reported that smoke caused respiratory problems. Pilots either couldn't fly or had to go miles out of their way to go around fires. Some traplines were burned over, causing economic hardship for the trappers.

These problems cannot be taken lightly. But land managers know that fires have a good side, too. They return nutrients to the soil, encourage the growth of browsing plants for moose and other animals, and remove old, dead fuel. Fire is a natural and important part of the environment that plants and animals

have adapted to over the years.

Under current guidelines, fire fighters take no action except to monitor fires in areas designated as "limited" in the Interagency Fire Management Plans. But this summer, several fires in limited areas grew to more than 100,000 acres. The Livengood fire reached 541,000 acres. Fire fighters were sent in to protect cabins and high-value lands, and the final cost is estimated to be \$5 million.

High suppression costs become a major factor in discussions about fire policy. While there is no question in the minds of most fire fighters that it is cheaper to fight all fires when they are small, other people disagree, saying that many fires will burn themselves out without harming valuable resources, and will actually improve wildlife habitat. These people say that it is more economical to let some fires burn, fighting only those that threaten valuable resources such as private property.

The questions are still being asked. When and where should

fires be allowed to burn? Who should decide? And what costs should be considered?

Most land managers agree that the current Department of the Interior and Bureau of Land Management policies to let some fires burn should not be changed. However, they also agree that some fine-tuning is needed to help determine which fires are to be fought and which are to be simply monitored. Perhaps prescribed fires could help achieve planned management actions and goals.

Meetings this winter between land managers and fire managers will determine what changes should be implemented. The Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plans have been in effect since 1980 and refinements are still being made. Interior Department and BLM policy will be the guide any modifications of the plans.

The 1988 fire season is over, but its legacy lives on.

—SM

BLM builds new trailhead in White Mountains



Public recreation facilities in the White Mountains National Recreation Area got a boost when BLM put in a new trailhead for the White Mountains summer and winter trails.

Until now, people have had to park across the Elliott Highway from the trail, unload their dogs or skis, cross the highway on a blind curve and

climb a steep embankment before reaching the trail. This pullout also is heavily used by tractor-trailer rigs moving between Fairbanks and Prudhoe Bay.

So just before freeze-up, BLM sent in a bulldozer and a front-end loader. They cleared dirt, bushes and small trees from the entry to the trail and smoothed the ground into a parking area.

In addition to plenty of parking space, BLM put in hitching posts for dog teams and built a loading ramp for off-road vehicles. Restrooms will be installed next summer.

BLM designed the new parking lot as the trailhead for two trails into the White Mountains. Formerly called the White Mountains Summer and Winter trails, both trails were being used year-round, so BLM has renamed them.

The former Summer Trail, which is used by hikers and skiers, is now called the *White Mountains Summit Trail*. The Winter Trail, used by people on four-wheelers and snow machines, has become the *Widisham Creek Trail*.



Bulldozer and front end loader quickly cleared the new parking lot.

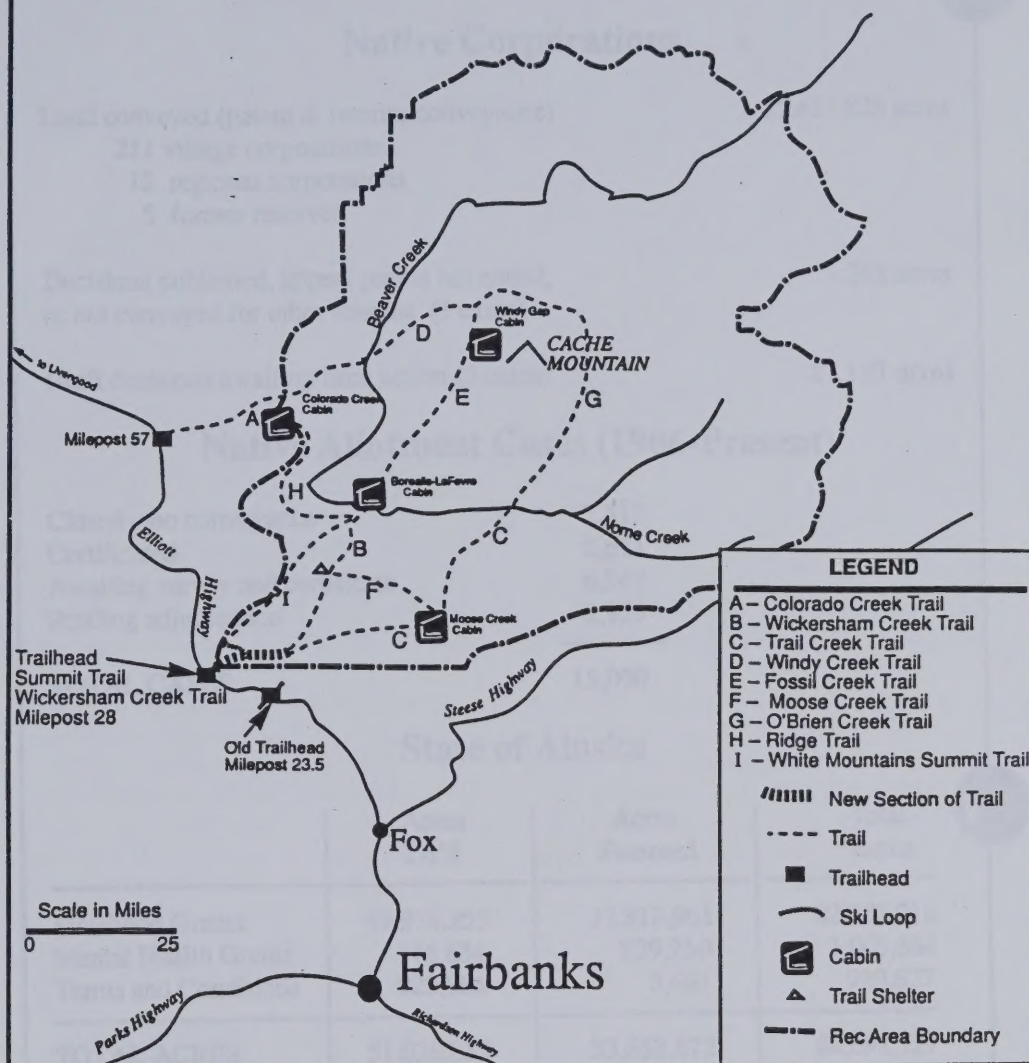


g faster! Ron Miller and Mike Allison, summer recreation employees for the BLM Steese/White Mountains District hurry to get hitching posts for dog teams into the ground before freeze-up.

The Summit Trail starts at the northwest end of the parking lot. The Wickersham Creek Trail starts at the northeast end and ties in with the old winter trail six miles later. Changing the route of the Wickersham Creek Trails adds three miles to the total length, making the Borealis-LeFevre cabin about 21 miles from the parking lot. The steep portion of the trail is now less severe.

The new part of the Wickersham Creek Trail takes you through spruce forests and sub-alpine terrain. About five miles from the trailhead is an unmarked trail to the right. By taking that, you can reach Lunch Rock, about 100 yards off the main trail. At some places on the trail you can see the White Mountains to the northeast and the Alaska Range to the south. The view from Lunch Rock provides a

White Mountains National Recreation Area



scenic 360-degree panorama.

The trailhead for the old winter trail will remain open for people who choose to use it, but BLM signs will be taken down.

The Wickersham Creek Trail will be open year-round to all-terrain vehicles weighing 1,500 pounds or less (counting passenger and load). Travelers must use caution over places that are windblown and barren of snow in the winter. The Summit Trail is limited to non-motorized travel, and remains closed to all-terrain vehicles.

A five-mile ski loop trail will be created by clearing a connecting trail between the Summit Trail and the Wickersham Creek Trail.

The construction of the new

parking area/trailhead was an effort by BLM to provide the public with facilities that will make their outdoor recreation experiences safer and more enjoyable. BLM identified the safety problem and made trailhead improvement a goal in its White Mountains Recreation Activity Management Plan, completed in 1988.

The project is just one facet of the planned recreational development of the White Mountains National Recreation Area, and you can count on hearing about more developments in the future.

—SDW

Land status updated

The adjacent table updates the status of Alaska land for BLM conveyances to Native corporations and the state of Alaska.

Native corporations have now received more than 35.6 million acres of their 44-million-acre entitlement.

The state of Alaska now has received almost 86 million acres of its 104.5-million-acre entitlement.

BLM FRONTIERS publishes these acreage totals as a service to our readers who are involved in this important function of the Bureau of Land Management.

—EB

BLM Land Conveyance Progress Report September 30, 1988

Native Corporations

Land conveyed (patent & interim conveyance)	35,637,828 acres
211 village corporations	
12 regional corporations	
5 former reserves	
Decisions published, appeal period not ended, or not conveyed for other reasons (3 cases)	388 acres
Draft decisions awaiting final action (2 cases)	27,320 acres

Native Allotment Cases (1906-Present)

Closed—no conveyance	2,513
Certificated	2,611
Awaiting survey and certificate	6,947
Pending adjudication	2,929
TOTAL CASES	15,000

State of Alaska

	Acres TA'd	Acres Patented	Total Acres
Statehood Grants	49,938,255	32,818,961	82,757,216
Mental Health Grants	176,634	829,250	1,005,884
Terms and Conditions	923,966	5,661	929,627
TOTAL ACRES	51,038,855	33,653,872	84,692,727

Judge dismisses National Wildlife Federation suit

The U.S. District Court has dismissed the lawsuit filed by the National Wildlife Federation against BLM. Judge John H. Pratt vacated the preliminary injunction and dismissed the case on the basis that the National Wildlife Federation did not have standing to bring suit.

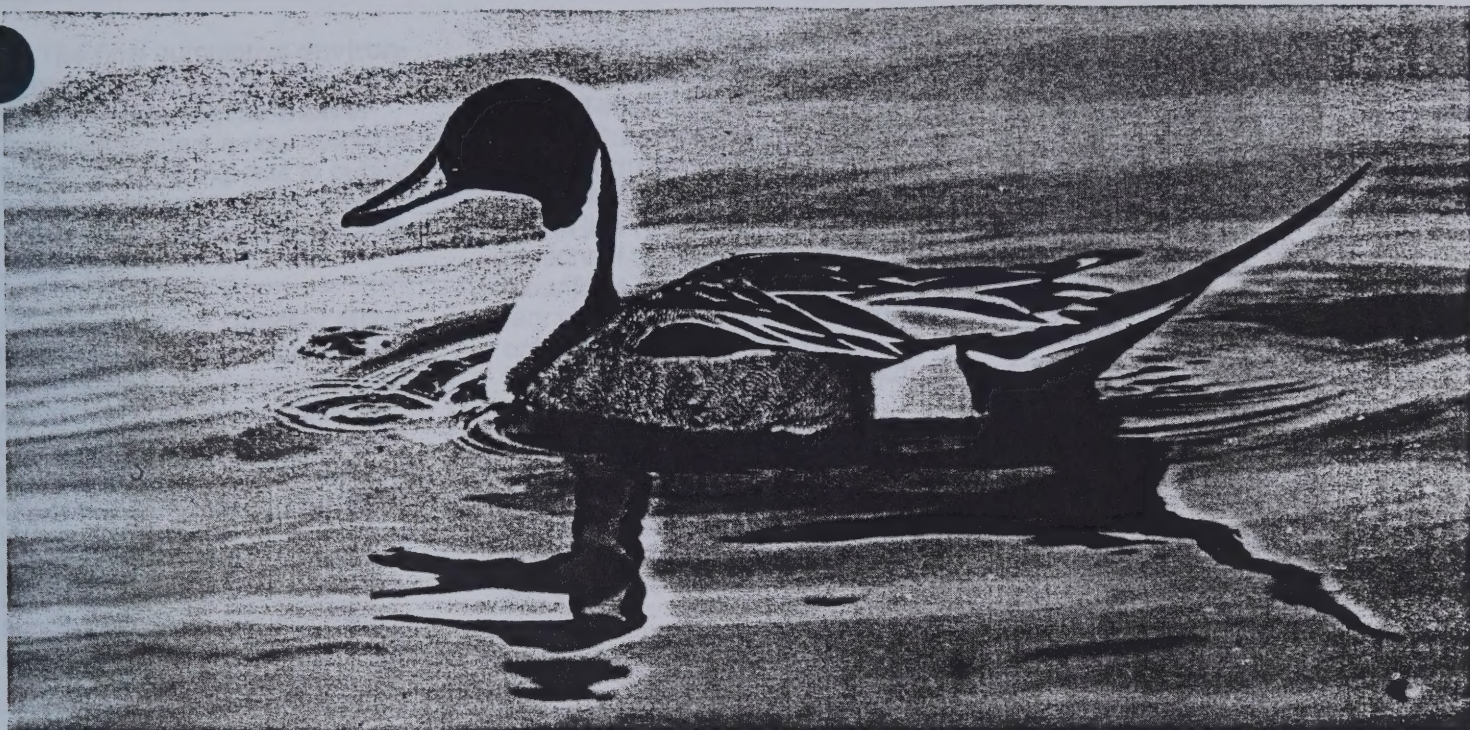
Dennis Hopewell, Acting Regional Solicitor for the Interior Department, commented, "This will now allow BLM to move ahead with the implementation of its management programs.

"In particular, it frees BLM to revoke and modify earlier land orders."

The case, which affects the status of approximately 180 million acres of public land, was first filed in July 1985.

—JGM

Ducks Unlimited and BLM map wetlands



This year's drought conditions in the Prairie Pothole region of the U.S. and Canada dramatized the crucial importance of Alaska's wetlands for the long-term survival of North American waterfowl.

Last summer, many birds had to move north to Alaska and Canada to find suitable habitat to raise their young or just survive.

Even during an "average" year the United States and Canada lose about 400,000 acres of valuable wetlands to development and agriculture. When this habitat disappears, many plants and animals die. The loss includes internationally significant waterfowl populations, rare shorebirds, and the diversity of plants and animals that provide for a stable environment.

Ducks Unlimited, Inc., an international conservation organization, has undertaken a large-scale assessment of wetlands in North America. This, when coupled with progressive conservation programs, will help preserve wetland and waterfowl habitat.

Last summer, BLM and Ducks Unlimited signed a cooperative agreement and began to inventory 10 million acres of public lands north and west of Glennallen. They have agreed to classify, map and

analyze wetlands and waterfowl habitat managed by BLM in Alaska.

The inventory used Landsat technology to gather information on the area. Landsat is a special satellite that collects resource data from light reflected from the earth's surface. The satellite transmits this data to receiving stations on earth where it is recorded on computer tapes.

Ducks Unlimited is now processing and analyzing this data to produce maps of wetlands and wetland types. This information will aid in the long-term monitoring and management of wetlands habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife. BLM provided habitat maps, field notes, local expertise and color infrared aerial photography of the area. BLM wildlife and fisheries program leader Craig Altop led a ground truthing exercise in the inventory area this summer.

Final editing of all data is nearing completion. All maps, color photographs and wetland statistics produced by the project will be used by BLM's Glennallen District for wetland and waterfowl management.

"The information that I have seen come out of this program already shows us some very interesting relationships," says Altop. "For

example, some wetlands appear to have seasonal differences in vegetation and vegetation structure than enhance their characteristics. This could be very important in the long term management of the area for waterfowl resources, especially when you consider the importance of Alaska to North American waterfowl populations," he said.

The cooperative efforts of BLM and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. will continue in 1989 on key wetland areas and waterfowl on BLM lands in Alaska.

This project is the first step in a long-term project planned by BLM and Ducks Unlimited to map Alaska's waterfowl habitat. "The effort this year was basically a pilot effort that paid off in a big way," says Altop. "The usefulness and flexibility of Ducks Unlimited's methodology, coupled with its cost-effectiveness exceeded my expectations. Not only do we get exceptional maps of waterfowl habitat and wetlands, we also get the capability to merge the data with other computer-generated map products. This increases our analysis capabilities significantly."

The public is invited to stop by the Glennallen District office later this winter when the maps and photos will be available for viewing.

—DA/EB

frontier flashes

The final cumulative **environmental impact statement on placer mining for the Beaver Creek watershed** is now available to the public. BLM expects to publish the final statement on the **Birch Creek watershed** by early to mid-December.

Alaska State Director Mike Penfold, immediate past president of the Anchorage Federal Executive Association, received a letter of **commendation from President Ronald Reagan** for establishing a Cooperative Administrative Support Unit in Anchorage. This unit will encourage interagency cooperation and the sharing of administrative support services. It is expected to save more than \$100 million annually.

Don Runberg, BLM Steese/White Mountains District manager, recently attended a symposium in Sun Valley, Idaho, on national recreation areas. He presented a photo and text display on the **White Mountains National Recreation Area**. The week-long conference was attended by representatives from the University of Idaho, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service and BLM.

During this fall's hunting season, people reacted very favorably to the new **off-road vehicle designations** in the **White Mountains National Recreation Area** and the **Steese National Conservation Area**.

In late August and September, personnel of the Steese/White mountains District staffed a temporary visitor contact station along the only road leading to the White Mountains area. They talked with about 300 hunters, fishermen, sightseers and gold panners.

Most people understood that the area and its resources had to be protected, and appreciated BLM staff efforts to explain the designations and the reasons behind them.



Please note that the Bureau of Land Management's state office address has changed. We're still at the same location in the Anchorage Federal Building, but the street number has been changed. Our **new street address is 222 West 7th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska**. The new mailing address is: **Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, 222 West 7th Ave., #13, Anchorage, AK 99513.**

In October Under Secretary of the Interior Earl E. Gjelde presented a **right-of-way grant to the Yukon Pacific Corporation** for a 36-inch gas pipeline across Alaska. Governor Steve Cowper spoke at the ceremony, terming the grant a significant accomplishment marked by "impressive cooperation between private industry, the State of Alaska and the federal government." A crowd of more than 100 people, including the Korean and Japanese Consuls General, witnessed the signing ceremony.



Return if not delivered in 10 days

OFFICIAL BUSINESS/Penalty for Private Use \$300

Chief, Public Affairs: David Vickery

Editor: Jane G. Mangus

Illustration/computer graphics: Jim Mroczek

Contributors:

Danielle Allen

Sharon Durgan Wilson

Sue Mitchell

Jane G. Mangus

Ed Bovy

Photos:

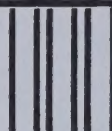
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, p. 1

Larry Kajdan, p. 2

Sharon Durgan Wilson, p. 4

Randy Goodwin, p. 5

Wayne Boden, p. 7



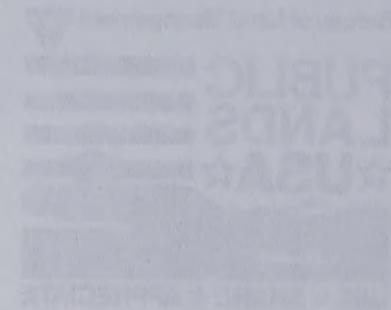
**POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR
INT 415**

Please note that the Bureau of Land Management's new office address has changed. We will be moving to the new address in the future. Our new address is 222 West 1st Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska. The new mailing address is: Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, 222 West 1st Ave., 99501, Anchorage, AK 99501.

In October 1984, Secretary of the Interior, James H. Douglas, announced a right-of-way grant to the Yukon Flats National Preserve. The grant provides for the development of the preserve and the protection of its wildlife resources. The grant also provides for the development of the preserve and the protection of its wildlife resources.

During the last meeting session, people reached with respect to the new off-road vehicle designations in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument and the Wrangell National Conservation Area. The meeting was held in the Wrangell National Conservation Area. The meeting was held in the Wrangell National Conservation Area.

BLM Library
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 85, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225



The first cumulative review of the BLM's management of public lands is now available. The review is available in the BLM's annual report. The review is available in the BLM's annual report.

Alaska State Director Mike ... The review is available in the BLM's annual report. The review is available in the BLM's annual report.

Don Ruppert, BLM District ... The review is available in the BLM's annual report. The review is available in the BLM's annual report.



BLM logo and text



BLM logo and text

BLM logo and text

BLM logo and text